



The B2B Sales Planning Handbook

**(Everything Sales Leaders Need to Know
to Create a Winning Sales Plan!)**



©3FORWARD, LLC, All Rights Reserved

Copyright holder is licensing this under the Creative Commons License, Attribution-No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/3.0/>. All trademarks are those of their respective companies. Please feel free to post this document in its entirety in your blog or email it to anyone you feel would benefit from reading it. Thank you

Executive Summary

Sales leaders, our B2B Sales Planning Handbook is intended to help you reach your revenue goals, faster and more efficiently. We wrote this to deliver value immediately, regardless of where you might be in your sales planning cycle or sales year. Besides fine-tuning your planning fundamentals, we hope it helps you become a more inspired, focused and effective sales manager.

A solid sales plan takes you from where you are now, to where you want to be. In short, it is the difference between Making it happen vs. Hoping it happens!

We've packed this Handbook with simple, strategic sales insights that you can use every day. While some of this may confirm what you already know, we hope you glean a tip and technique or two that may improve your goal-setting practices, sales pipeline, selling process and sales measurements.

For sales leaders like you, the scope of your work goes well beyond selling. It covers the trickier elements of sales plan creation, territory and market segmentation, key performance indicators and a whole lot more. We believe that creating a formalized selling process helps build a stronger, more agile sales department.

Enjoy this sales planning handbook, and we would be happy to hear your feedback.

Sincerely,



[Dan Hudson](#) and [Matt Smith](#)
3FORWARD



Chapter 1: Setting Sales Goals and Targets

The sales plan sets the road map for everything that goes into a successful sales year. It must answer two basic questions:

- What revenue targets do you plan to achieve in the upcoming sales year?
- How are you going to achieve those targets?

So, the opening section of the sales plan – Sales Goals and Targets –maps out your objectives and sets your path for the next year.

THE BIG PICTURE APPROACH

There's a new year coming up and it's time to start putting together your strategic sales plan. How can you work smarter, not harder? How can you make sure you aren't overlooking any opportunities? Start by stepping back and taking a "Big Picture" approach; look at everything going on around your company and industry.

Ask yourself these Pre-Planning questions:

- What factors might impact our sales results next year?
- How has our marketplace or prospect base changed in the last few quarters or years?
- Do I have to make adjustments to our sales process or sales support models?
- If I need to increase sales revenues next year (*and who doesn't?!*), do I have the people in place and the enabling technologies that will increase our sales efficiency?
- Are there any "leaks" in our sales pipeline, places where leads and sales opportunities could slip through?

Before you start planning your next year, here are some of the components of your sales plan that should receive a fresh review each planning year. Sales environments and economic situations change quickly. A selling strategy that made sense at one time may need dramatic revisions a year later.

- Lead Management
- Account Management
- Opportunity Management
- Territory / Area Management
- Pipeline Process
- Metrics and Reporting
- Team Skills Development
- Rep and Manager Recruiting
- Compensation

Sales environments and economic situations change quickly. A selling strategy that made sense at one time may need dramatic revisions a year later.

Now, are you ready to get started and create your sales plan? Let's talk about how to set realistic, actionable sales goals and targets...

DEFINING GOALS, CHALLENGES AND INVESTMENTS

1. Get Specific

Although goals and targets are often used synonymously, they are in fact quite different. Compare their definitions¹:

Goals: Destinations or where we want the business to be and feel,

for example:

- Relationships
- Reputation
- Image
- Sustainability
- Culture

Targets: Specific results we want the business to achieve, progress markers to attaining goals;

for example:

- Revenue
- Profit
- Market share
- Recognition

Goals and targets often work in tandem with each other. However, too often, sales goals and targets have a case of the “warm and fuzzies” – a feel-good tone that is vague and undefined. To be clear and actionable, goals and targets must be specific (*numbers and dates are best*) so that you can measure your progress throughout the year.

Example of “Fuzzy and Feel Good” Targets

Establish new relationships for our US Financial and Accounting Outsourcing practice.

Example of “Specific and Measurable” Targets

Establish two new relationships per quarter in the US Financial and Accounting Outsourcing practice. The targeted annual contract value of each new relationship is \$2 million.

When setting your goals and targets, try to strike the sweet spot between “go big or go home” and the reality of your market situation. Every company faces its unique market challenges, but if you are prepared, it makes it easier to overcome them.

To be clear and actionable, goals and targets must be specific (numbers and dates are best) so that you can measure your progress

2. Prioritize Challenges and Set Defensive Strategies

Consider your last couple sales years and think about those things that kept you from achieving all your sales targets.

Then, list out these challenges, their impact and priority, and start documenting your approach to minimizing these sales barriers. Use a template such as the following to identify, rank and address your challenges.

¹*From our well-worn version of [Marketing Plans that Work – Targeting Growth and Profitability](#), copyright 2002.

Preparing for Sales Plan Risks and Challenges

Challenge	Not enough qualified output from marketing's lead generation program.
Affects	The sales pipeline and ability to make the annual revenue target
Severity	High
Recommendation	Meet with Marketing to jointly define what constitutes a qualified lead. Accelerate identification of target accounts to increase lead funnel size.
Assigned To	Joe King
Complete By	March 1, 2012

3. Define Changes and Investments Needed to Achieve Success

You are likely in the same boat as most sales leaders heading into a new year: *You're getting a quota increase.* In the old days we might have grumbled a little, played around with territories and headcount then told the CEO we needed another seven sales reps to meet the new number. You based that number on your experience that one or two of the seven would make quota. Three or four would become permanent "B" players and the others would likely fail miserably.

MORE EFFECTIVE APPROACHES TO INVESTING IN SALES SUCCESS

Yes, headcount is still a critical success factor for a sales team expected to make its number. However, studies of best-in-class sales teams *clearly demonstrate* many other vital components to improving sales effectiveness and revenue results. These are more long-term, systemic improvements that actually allow all members of your team to perform better and also improve the success rates of future new hires.

Sales process improvements based on best-practices create permanent increases in both win-rates and quota attainment for B2B sales teams. Here are some examples of these kinds of investments that you should consider.

- Establishing a formalized sales process, including targeted account planning
- Sales manager effectiveness training and industry-specific rep training
- Lead management process and a marketing automation system
- Sales leaders dashboard and sales knowledge management
- Sales intelligence, prospect profiling and industry monitoring

There you have an example of **Setting Sales Goals and Targets**, the first section in creating your new sales plan. You can clearly see why getting this area down on paper sets the stage for everything else in your plan.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SETTING SALES GOALS AND TARGETS

[Sales Revenue Forecasting](#)

[Sales Optimization Review for CEOs and Sales Leaders](#)

[The Complete 2012 B2B Sales Planning Outline... And It's Only 359 Words](#)

[Proof That Sales Planning Increases Win Rates](#)

Sales process improvements based on best-practices create permanent increases in both win-rates and quota attainment

Share:   



Wrap Up

As a sales leader, your actions set the performance expectations for your sales team. The plan, selling process, and method of balances and checks that you create directly contribute to your peoples –and ultimately, your company’s – success!

Your sales plan must consider the basic five factors we’ve considered here, namely how to:

- Set sales goals and targets
- Build the revenue model
- Fill the funnel
- Create a selling culture
- Execute and measure

If you have any questions, or want to continue the discussion on how you can develop stronger selling culture and a systematic approach to selling, we invite you to join our [Sales Readiness group on LinkedIn](#). If you want to get tips and ready-to-use sales strategies delivered directly to your in-box, please sign up for our newsletter, [Above the Funnel](#).

Thank you and best regards,

Dan Hudson and Matt Smith

ABOUT 3FORWARD

3FORWARD helps, guides and supports company leaders through sales transitions. Are you a CEO, Chief Sales Officer or senior Marketing executive tired of hoping for best-in-class sales results AND committed to making the changes to get there? Our sales effectiveness programs are designed around one goal – helping your firm improve results today – not next year.

Working with 3FORWARD is more like a workout with a personal fitness trainer than buying time from traditional consulting companies. We much prefer rolling up our sleeves with you and your team, getting our hands dirty and helping you reach your revenue goals faster than if you have to tackle them by yourself.

3FORWARD’S LEADERSHIP

Before launching 3FORWARD, founders Dan Hudson and Matt Smith had already enjoyed successful careers in B2B sales leadership, marketing and business development. Each has been in the sales world for more than 25 years and along the way developed a strong belief in the science of selling over sales as an art.

Share:   



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

DAN HUDSON 3FORWARD co-founder and President, Dan Hudson has a B2B sales and sales leadership background of more than 30 years. At 3FORWARD Dan is responsible for the company's sales strategies, new business development and is actively involved in all client engagements.

Dan's experience extends across industries including IT outsourcing and services, business process outsourcing, computer hardware and software, health care and telecommunications.

Dan is a member of Marketing Executive's Networking Group, AberdeenGroup's Business Review Research Panel, founder & co-chair of Dallas Social Media Breakfast and a member of International Association of Outsourcing Professionals.

Company: www.3forward.com
Linkedin: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/danHUDSON3forward>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/danHUDSON.at.3forward>
Twitter: http://twitter.com/Dan_3forward



MATT SMITH 3FORWARD co-founder and Executive Vice President, Matt Smith has a B2B sales and marketing background of more than 25 years. Matt is responsible for 3FORWARD's marketing and social media strategies and is actively involved in all client engagements.

Matt's experience extends across industries including ITO and BPO, systems integration, IT hardware and services, software, pharmaceuticals and banking/financial services.

Matt is a member of the [Marketing Automation Software Advisory Board](#), founder / co-chair of Dallas Social Media Breakfast and past chair of the Outsourcing Institute's Road Show Series.

Company: www.3forward.com
Linkedin: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/mattsmith3forward>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/MattSmith.at.3forward>
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/mattat3forward>